

## **Duplicate Records and Unduplicated Counts**

**Unduplicated counts.** One of the major benefits of an HMIS (Homeless Management Information System) such as WISP is to determine how many different clients are receiving services in your community. This is generally referred to as an Unduplicated Count. When we run reports, we expect WISP to give us our reports in terms of an unduplicated client count. This is also done at the system, e.g. when we report the number of clients who have received homeless services statewide for a given period of time.

Just how does the system do this and what can you do to make this number as accurate as possible? Let's take a look – using as our example, a client named Ms. Ima Lion.

To do the “unduplicated count”, WISP uses four fields to create a fifth data field called the UniqueID. The four fields used are: the client first name, last name, gender, and date of birth. To the extent that any one of these is missing, the chance for an error in the unduplicated count is increased. An example:

Record 1: Ima Lion, no gender, no DOB                      UniqueID = ILO 00000000

Record 2: Ima Lion, female, DOB of 12/23/1974.      UniqueID = ILOf12231974

With that information, WISP would count this as two clients. Later, if the agency that created the first record were to add in: female, and DOB of 12/23/1974 then WISP would count it as one client – however users would still be faced with two records in the system, and all services and other information must either be duplicated or be missing.

**UniqueID.** All of this counting or identification is done using something called a “Unique ID”. You can see this field in ReportWriter, by selecting the Client table and then the UniqueID field. When the uniqueID for two records has the same value, WISP considers them the same client!

The BEST way to ensure that Ms. Lion is not duplicated is enter her into the system only one time, using the search function of ClientPoint to see if someone else, either in our agency or somewhere else, has already entered her. One common error is to assume that because this is the first visit by Ms. Lion to your agency that you need to create a new record – but with almost 140 agencies now using WISP, obviously she may already be in the system!

**Client table – Open.** Now for all agencies and programs except DV (covered later), you need to keep the client name available so that others will know the client is in the system already. To do this, in the setup for each program you need to leave the “Client” line set to Open. You should also leave the WI Additional Profile open – so that in the lookup you can see the date of birth, gender, and race. This assures that someone looking later can positively identify the client and not create a new client record instead.

**Anonymous records.** One of the reasons WISP procedures say that only victims of Domestic Violence should be entered as Anonymous is because every Anonymous record is always, and permanently counted as unique. Please note: it is not required that every DV client be entered as anonymous; we are saying that only DV clients may be entered as anonymous.

**Open vs. Closed vs. Anonymous.** There are some limited situations where the record for a client should appropriately be closed, including the client name. The way to do this is to simple

“Close” that client’s record. You should NOT enter them as Anonymous. When a record is closed, YOU determine who is able to view that information. Using our example above, if one agency were to enter Ima Lion and close the record, a second agency would not “see” the record and would create another record for Ima Lion. However, when WISP does a client count for that community, WISP would only count one client. For non-DV clients, use the close option for a record instead of Anonymous to limit others access to the information.